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But almost all were alike in this—that they were socialists, and regarded the social democratic state not as a dream but as a practicable ideal. Of course he found the working classes permeated by discontent, but it was a discontent which had a nobler basis than mere greed. The result of his observations was a conviction that the labor question is not merely a bread and butter question, but an intellectual and moral question of the first moment. He found existing, on the part of the whole class of factory operatives, “an ardent longing for more respect and recognition, for greater actual and social equality in distinction to the formal and political equality which is already theirs,” and in accordance with this a “deep desire to be no longer, in the coming industrial order, merely the dumb and passive instruments of a superior will ; no longer obedient machines, but men ; not hands alone, but heads.” Of what Pastor Göhre says regarding the irreligion which he found amongst the working classes, and regarding his conception of the Church’s duty in relation to social questions, this is hardly the place to speak.

The whole volume, however, will repay thoughtful and repeated perusal. The great light which it throws upon many obscure sides of the great, complex social problem which Germany, like other countries, is facing to-day, is simply invaluable.

The translation seems to have been successfully done.

WILLIAM HARBUTT DAWSON.

Town Life in the Fifteenth Century. By Mrs. J. R. GREEN. 2 vols. Pp. 441 and 476. Price, \$5.00. New York and London : Macmillan & Co., 1894.

Mrs. Green’s work had been announced for some time before its appearance, and was looked for with considerable interest. Several claims to attention combined to lead scholars, even more than general readers, to expect a book of more than usual importance. In a certain sense Mrs. Green’s work was the continuation of her husband’s. In fact the present volumes she explains to be a development of the ideas of a well-known chapter in the *History of the English People*. His great influence on the reading and study of English history has been very generally recognized to have been deprived of its full effect by his early death, and in this work that influence might fairly be expected to continue. Secondly, the phase of history treated of is rapidly becoming the dominant aspect of historical study. It seems that the most original, most productive and most promising English historical work is, for the present, at least, being done in economic history ; and a careful study of the organization and life of the towns

at perhaps the most critical period of their history, would certainly be no unimportant contribution to that subject. Lastly, the fifteenth century is the least known period in English history since the Norman Conquest. Most of the monastic chronicles stop before the beginning of that century; the city chronicles have hardly begun and are local rather than national where they do exist; the great landed estates have not left such full papers, and the line of great writers is almost completely broken. There are just two sources that promise a fuller knowledge than we already possess of that period; the local records of the towns and the local records of the manors. General as well as economic history might, therefore, gladly welcome any picture of the life of the fifteenth century drawn largely from one of these sources.

And much of the promise indicated in these claims to interest has certainly been fulfilled. We have two handsome volumes beautifully printed and beautifully written. Mrs. Green's style is clear, graceful and eloquent, notwithstanding one or two habitual affectations, such as "big" and "bigger," for "large" and "larger." For all the apparent technicality of the subject the book is easy and interesting reading to anyone interested in history in any form. The town life of that distant period is made to seem real, the persons lifelike, and the events natural. Our old familiar general history too takes on a new clearness of outline when we suddenly meet its kings or ministers, its great barons or churchmen moving and speaking and disputing with these burgher folk. There is no other collected body of information concerning cities and boroughs at the close of the Middle Ages at all comparable to this for amount and truthfulness. The growth of handicrafts in these towns, the early triumphs of English commercial enterprise, the relations of the town corporations with the lords above them and the populace below them; their quarrels with the church, with their neighboring towns, rivals or allies; the gild merchant and the craft guilds, burghers and interlopers, the ordinary life of the people and its frequent vicissitudes—all these are described and illustrated with a wealth of example and quotation from the records of more than eighty towns. This book is evidently, therefore, a valuable addition to English historical literature, and readers of English history will find it, in its picturesqueness, its originality, its delightful clearness of style, a worthy accompaniment to Mr. Green's best work.

But there must be another side to our estimate. It has been said above that special students of the subject also looked forward to this work as an important contribution to scholarship, as well as to historical literature, and these, we fear, will feel somewhat disappointed with

the results of Mrs. Green's study. Such a wide survey of the field, and such a deliberate study of the original materials should have cleared up more of our difficulties, given us a deeper insight into the constitution of the towns, and made a more calm estimate of their relative importance in the life of the period. The fault is not in the materials from which the book is constructed. References are invariably given, and are either to original authorities, or to the best secondary works, as for instance in matters of commerce to Schanz's *Englische Handelspolitik*. Nor indeed can the fact that the title of the book is something of a misnomer be considered as a serious fault. Although the only restriction of period is an avoidance of events after the close of the fifteenth century, yet this absence of effort to give a definite picture of the fifteenth as distinct from earlier centuries probably prevents the introduction of indefensible statements or distinctions. But from the scholar's standpoint there is one considerable sin of omission, and at least two of commission. The first is the failure to throw light on the especially difficult questions connected with town history. It is true that the discussion of the origin of the towns is fairly enough precluded by the lateness of the period chosen; but in the question whether the characteristic elements of the city governments began when they received their charters, or existed before, only receiving confirmation in the charters, the author takes the first alternative for granted without discussion through the whole work, only to throw doubt on it incidentally in a late chapter on another subject. Again, there is a very general difference of opinion among scholars as to whether the towns were generally decaying at the close of the fifteenth century or not. On this Mrs. Green makes no generalization whatever, nor could one easily be constructed from her narrative. On the nature of the most important institutions in the towns, the merchant and craft guilds, we get absolutely no new light. The difficult and interesting questions relating to the political organization of the towns, though alluded to everywhere in the book, are discussed only in one short chapter. In this the original suggestion is made that the "*communitas*" was the mass of inhabitants claiming rights from an immemorial custom, while the "*burgenses*" were the active citizens under chartered privileges; but this theory is quite inadequately supported, and too lightly discussed. It is moreover inconsistent with the exclusive position given everywhere else to the written charters of the towns.

Of the second class of faults, one is a certain tendency to exaggeration. The line between the dramatic and the melodramatic cannot always be drawn very distinctly, but a constant effort to attain even the former is a dangerous habit for historians. For

instance, the statement as to the independence of the towns in the fifteenth century in the first paragraphs of the book not only gives an exaggerated and a false impression, but as a generalization it is contradicted by the multitude of individual limitations detailed afterward, especially in the chapter on the "Problem of Government." Lastly, the author's somewhat uncritical habit allows one constantly to suppose that she considers the stages of development of all the towns to have been so nearly simultaneous, and their characteristics so similar that what is true for one is true for all at the same period. On page 179 of the first volume, the declaration that the newly made burgess "was bound to live within the walls of the borough, for his franchise was forfeited if he forsook the town for a year and a day" is a perfectly general statement, and we learn from a foot-note only that the provision was peculiar to Carlisle. Perhaps in an individual instance such an objection is hypercritical, but when it occurs a hundred times, the value of the work is seriously diminished.

To sum up then, the large body of intelligent general readers of history will find the work under review eminently valuable and interesting, the small group of special students of English economic history will find in it valuable references to original sources and suggestive descriptions of detached episodes, but they will not find that any substantial progress has been made in their own field of work.

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Co-operative Production. By BENJAMIN JONES, with prefatory note by the Rt. Hon. A. H. Dyke Acland, M. P., Vice-president of the Committee of Council on Education. Pp. viii and 839. Price, \$3.50. Oxford: Clarendon Press; New York: Macmillan & Co., 1894.

This book, for which "The History of Co-operation in Great Britain" would be a less misleading title, finds its public ready to receive it. While not a little has been written concerning the theory, expediency and desirability of co-operation, we have here for the first time an exhaustive account of the practice of the movement. The following sentences from the preface explain sufficiently the character of the work: "To preserve the experience and knowledge of those who remember some of the earlier efforts in associated industry, . . . and to search such scanty records as remain, is the task which has been undertaken here. . . . Here, for the first time, are put together, in a compact form, the records of many efforts, successful and unsuccessful, to realize the aims of the older co-operators of the earlier part of this century. . . . This information was fast slipping away when Mr. Jones